



**CHILD PASSENGER
SAFETY ASSOCIATION
OF CANADA**



**L'ASSOCIATION POUR
LA SÉCURITÉ DES ENFANTS
PASSAGERS DU CANADA**

CPSAC calls for stronger car seat and booster seat laws across Canada

Modernized car seat laws would help children stay in existing seats longer

September 22, 2026 — Where a child lives in Canada can determine what the law requires to keep them safe in a vehicle.

This Child Passenger Safety Week (September 19-27), the Child Passenger Safety Association of Canada (CPSAC) is highlighting significant differences in car seat and booster seat legislation across the country and calling on each province and territory to strengthen child passenger legislation to align with current evidence.

CPSAC's updated 2026 recommendations call for legislation that is clear, practical, and informed by current evidence about how children are best protected when traveling in a passenger vehicle. CPSAC also wants laws to provide equitable access to safe transportation for children with disabilities or special health care needs affecting travel and for children in taxis and ride-share vehicles.

In 2023, CPSAC partnered with Parachute Canada and Child Safety Link to develop and share these recommendations with transportation and health ministers in each province and territory. The core recommendations remain unchanged; the 2026 update adds new evidence and a jurisdictional scan that further strengthens the rationale for change.

The recommendations address five areas: protection in taxis and ride-share vehicles; safe legal transportation options for children with disabilities affecting travel; rear-facing car seat use until at least age two; use of a five-point harness until at least age five; and continued booster use for children under 12 until they reach 145 cm (57 in).

Importantly, strengthening those age and size requirements would not require asking families to purchase a different car seat, but to use the seat they have for longer.

Today's car seats and booster seats are already designed to accommodate children beyond the proposed legal minimums. CPSAC's review found that current Canadian

seats generally allow children to remain rear-facing beyond age two, harnessed beyond age five, and in a booster seat to at least 145 cm or 57 in tall.

Why legislation matters

Car seats, booster seats, and seat belts significantly reduce the risk of injury and death when they fit the child and are used correctly.

CPSAC's review cites evidence that caregivers frequently interpret legal requirements as safety standards, making legislation an important public health tool. These recommendations use clear age thresholds alongside weight and height requirements to make the rules easier to understand, communicate, and enforce.

Five recommendations for revised provincial and territorial legislation for child passengers:

CPSAC recommends that every province and territory:

1. Require children to be properly restrained in all passenger vehicles, including taxis and ride-share vehicles.
2. Provide clear, safe, legal transportation options for children with disabilities or special health care needs, including access to appropriate Canadian-certified adaptive seats and, when necessary, adaptive restraints certified to recognized standards in other jurisdictions.
3. Require children to remain rear-facing until at least age 2 and 10 kg (22 lb).
4. Requires children to remain in a car seat with a five-point harness until at least age 5 and 18 kg (40 lb).
5. Requires children under age 12 to remain in a booster seat until they reach at least 145 cm (57 in).

CPSAC is also recommending appropriate provisions for the uncommon situations where a child exceeds the height or weight limits of available seats before reaching a legislated age minimum.

Quote

"Our laws should reflect what the evidence tells us about how children are best protected in a vehicle. Right now, no province or territory meets all five of our recommendations.

For many families, these changes wouldn't mean buying another seat. The seats they already own are designed to keep children rear-facing, forward-facing in a harness, and

in a booster seat until they meet these recommendations. We're asking governments to bring legal minimums closer to the way today's car seats are designed and recommended to be used.

The car seats have changed. The evidence has changed. Across Canada, the laws haven't kept pace."

— **Katherine Hutka, President, Child Passenger Safety Association of Canada**

Current Canadian roadside research demonstrates the continuing challenge of misuse. In recent research conducted in Nova Scotia, 81% of car seats and booster seats checked had at least one error, reinforcing the importance of both clear requirements and accessible education and support for caregivers.

This issue is already part of active road-safety policy discussions. Newfoundland and Labrador recently completed a public consultation on potential changes to its *Highway Traffic Act* that specifically included car-seat and booster-seat requirements. All provinces and territories will need to consider legislative change in advance of expected federal regulatory updates.

Quick facts

- CPSAC has developed five recommendations for provincial and territorial child passenger safety legislation.
- CPSAC recommends children remain rear-facing until at least age 2 and 10 kg (22 lb). All convertible car seats currently available in Canada can accommodate children rear-facing beyond that minimum.
- CPSAC recommends children remain in a car seat with a five-point harness until at least age 5 and 18 kg (40 lb). No province or territory currently states a minimum age to move out of a car seat with a harness.
- CPSAC recommends children younger under age 12 continue to use a booster seat until they reach 145 cm (57 in). Adult seat belts do not fit most children safely until approximately this height.
- Requirements for children travelling in taxis and ride-share vehicles vary across Canada. CPSAC recommends that child-restraint requirements apply in all passenger vehicles and exemptions for taxis be removed.
- CPSAC is calling for clear legislation to ensure children with disabilities or special health care needs can legally use appropriate adaptive restraints rather than relying on exemptions that may permit unrestrained travel.

Associated links

- CPSAC: Provincial and territorial advocacy and legislative recommendations [CPSAC Advocacy](#)
- CPSAC: Find a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician [Find a Tech](#)
- CPSAC: Caregiver resources [Caregiver Resources](#)
- CPSAC: [Canadian roadside study finds 8 in 10 car seats misused](#)

Media contacts

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For broadcast use

30-second broadcast

This Child Passenger Safety Week, CPSAC is calling for stronger car seat and booster seat laws.

No province or territory currently meets all five child passenger safety recommendations from the Child Passenger Safety Association of Canada.

For most families, that wouldn't mean buying another seat. It would simply mean using the seat they already have for longer.

Learn more at CPSAC dot org.

60-second broadcast

This Child Passenger Safety Week, CPSAC is calling for laws that better reflect current evidence about how children are protected as they grow.

The recommendations include keeping children rear-facing until at least age two and 22 pounds, in a five-point harness until at least age five and 40 pounds, and in a harness or booster until they reach 145 centimetres, or four-foot-nine.

No province or territory currently meets all five child passenger safety recommendations from the Child Passenger Safety Association of Canada.

CPSAC is also calling for child-restraint requirements in taxis and ride-share vehicles and clear legal options for children with disabilities who need adaptive restraints.

And for most families, stronger age and size requirements wouldn't mean buying another car seat. Today's seats are already designed to keep children rear-facing, harnessed and in boosters longer.

CPSAC says the goal is to bring legal minimums closer to the way today's car seats are already designed to be used.

Find the full recommendations at [CPSAC dot org](https://cpsac.org).